

The Stay Laws.
We republish in this issue the new Stay Law, and also the Supplemental Act, in regard to small debts. These are of great importance, and it will be well for our readers to preserve them for future reference.

What Does It Mean?
A correspondent of the Radical paper published in this city, in speaking of the election of a "party by the name of" French, who hail from this State, and who was elected Sergeant-at-Arms of the United States Senate, says: "In regard to this, let it be understood that in future men who are employed at the Capitol will be recognized on account of merit, not color."

Tenure of Office Act.
The repeal or suspension of this Act has become temporarily the question of the hour in Washington City. The latest count gives twenty-nine Senators for repeal and thirty-two for suspension, with two Democrats absent from sickness. The parties are divided as follows: For Suspension, Radicals 24, Carpet-baggers 8. For Repeal, Democrats 8, Radicals 17, Carpet-baggers 1. Senator Pool is put down in favor of repeal. As to Senator Abbott, the following extract from the correspondence of the New York World will give his reported position, as well as other matters of interest:

"If the list, as it is, is in giving the reputation may raise the four carpet-baggers are very uncertain, and may leave Mr. Morton in the lurch. On the other hand, there is a report that the money is more than enough to support the repeal, and that the carpet-baggers look on repeal as a 'lost cause.' The repeaters, however, expect their twenty-nine votes will be enough, because they anticipate that several senators will waver at the last moment. There is no evidence, however, to establish this, and all will probably be whipped in time. The Democrats, Messrs. Anthony and Abbott, are the subjects of an immense pressure to-night, and are claimed by both sides. Their going for repeal, however, still makes one more vote necessary, if all the thirty-two repeaters do the mark. Mr. Anthony is likely to vote for suspension, and Mr. Morton for repeal. The election of the former to the Presidency pro tem, of the Senate, makes him a very important man, and his going for suspension is a very handsome library. Mr. Hoar is now Attorney General.

So much for the "presents."
A year or two ago, Mr. Fish, in connection with a few wealthy gentlemen, made up a purse of one hundred thousand dollars as a present to General Grant, which he accepted. Mr. Fish is now Secretary of State.
So much for the "money."
Another amiable weakness which the new President has exhibited, and which has provoked some comment among his political friends, is the nepotism which has characterized his appointments. Mr. Sharp, a brother-in-law, has been appointed Marshal of the District of Columbia, a position decidedly more lucrative than that of President of the United States.
Mr. Casey, another brother-in-law, has been appointed Collector of the port of New Orleans, probably the most lucrative Federal office in the South. The Grant and Dent families have already secured positions or are to be appointed. More patriotic than Artemus Ward, rather than a family feud will appear to office "every one of his wife's able-bodied male relations."

But however gratifying it may be for him to receive "money and presents," and provide appointments for his family, few as they have been, are not being received with much favor by his party. Says the Springfield Republican, an influential Radical paper:

"It would be useless to deny that the Presidential appointments are made and canvassed at Washington in a manner that does not strengthen the new administration in the hearts of the people. They are very little about Grant's relatives and personal friends, but a great deal about the selection of good men for the office, great and small. It is very well for the President to select his men for places before consulting his Cabinet, provided he selects good ones. But 'no man is so wise as all men,' and if he will listen carefully to the voice of public opinion, he will find that the politicians are not the only men who look grave at the prospect of such better appointments of consanguinity and friendship as have been hawked about for the last few days."

The Railroad Mania and the People.
For one reason or another, interested or disinterested, patriotic or selfish, honest or dishonest, a perfect mania to appropriate money to build railroads, with discretion and without discretion, has seized upon a large majority of the members of the present Legislature of North Carolina. Doubtless some are influenced by the patriotic purpose of developing the hidden resources of the State and eventually adding to its wealth. However honest such may be in their aim, they certainly do not consider the extreme poverty of our people. Thousands of those now struggling for a livelihood, and who will be entirely ruined by the onerous taxes which these appropriations will entail, are as anxious as the members of the Legislature to see railroads built and all sections of the State provided with cheap and speedy transportation to market. A few years of good harvests, after quiet has been restored and our labor-

Provisional Governments not Recognized.
The Jackson (Miss.) Clarion says that Mr. H. Spangler living in France a patrimony which he wished to realize, made to Rev. Paul Huber a power of attorney to receive the fund in France. It was authenticated, and the certificate under the great seal of Mississippi was signed "Adelbert Ames, Br't Maj. Gen. U. S. A., Prov'l Gov'r of Miss." The document was presented by Father Huber to the French Consul at New Orleans. After having partly written his consular certificate, he observed the above signature to the Governor's certificate, and refusing to recognize the Provisional Governor, he declined to give his official certificate.

Money and Presents.
"Ulysses, when a very small boy," wrote Grant pre to the New York Ledger, "was very fond of money and presents." This trait of character which was so prominent a feature of the "very small boy" as to attract the attention and made a matter of record by the father, seems to have "grown with the growth and strengthened with the strength" of the man. The reputation of the biographer has not been brought into discredit by the man discarding this leading feature of the boy, nor has the son suffered any pecuniary loss by the consideration thoughtfulness of the father. Shrewd observers have profited by these golden words, and as an advertisement merely the announcement has paid well. And just here we would advise our business men to "stick a pin," for judicious advertisements will pay.

A witty contemporary well observes that the President is well named U. S. in the vocabulary of that functionary meaning, "me and my friends." For we are satisfied that no man has been more prompt to reward his friends, especially those who have most liberally gratified his penchant for "money and presents." Possibly one policy, for Grant has one or two policies, has been even more prominent than this and more hasty in its execution, and that is the rapid and unceremonious punishment meted out to former military friends who have not supported his political aspirations. In the name of the General of the Army, even before the vacancy caused by his legal resignation had been filled, so great was his haste, he banishes General Hancock to Dakota, assigns General GILLES to an obscure position, and promotes SHERIDAN over MEADE, THOMAS and HALECK.

However much he may have avenged himself upon these old soldiers he has not forgotten his fondness for "money and presents" and there has been no lack of men to take advantage of this amiable little weakness. Now Washburne secured Grant's commission for him at the breaking out of the war, and after his defeat in Missouri and at Shiloh was his first friend with President LINCOLN. He was made Secretary of State and then Minister to France. And thus far has secured only two good appointments for his near relatives.
Mr. STEWART was a liberal subscriber to the house presented to Grant in New York, and also the one presented to him in Washington, and bought the latter house of him to present to General SHERMAN.
Mr. BOKIE contributed freely of his means to purchase Grant a house in Philadelphia, which he yet owns and rents.
Mr. BOHIE is Secretary of the Navy.

Mr. HOAR presented General Grant a very handsome library. Mr. Hoar is now Attorney General.
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ers have forsaken politics for work, these people will be in a condition to contribute freely, either directly, or by taxes through the State, for this purpose. But now when the Treasury is absolutely empty, the interest on our State debt unpaid, and the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the State government accumulating with fearful rapidity, we submit that North Carolina is in no condition to lend her aid to foster works of internal improvement.

The prompt action of the Legislature in rendering nugatory the recent decision of the Supreme Court declaring the Stay Law unconstitutional, by enactments of doubtful benefit and more doubtful legality, yet giving a greater stay to the collection of debts, tells most forcibly of the impoverished condition of the State. These acts are but the irresistible echoes of the appeals for relief which went up from the people in reply to that decision. Yet members will thus place upon record the poverty of their constituents and show to what lengths they will go to relieve them, and the very next moment vote an appropriation of millions of dollars for a railroad, and for allowing the Commissioners of their county to levy a special tax. How silly, if not wicked, is such action. How adverse to the true interests of the State and the people. Men may talk of taxing a county one hundred thousand dollars to be expended in the county for the building of a railroad, and declaim upon the increased value of the lands and the importance of the railroad. But when the tax payer must sacrifice his lands to meet these extraordinary taxes, such arguments are worse than unmeaning—they are bitter mockery. Unable now to pay their private debts; unable to meet the taxes necessary to provide for the interest on the public debt; unable to furnish a proper system of education for the poor children of the State; the railroads already completed struggling for a bare maintenance, and some without success; the people dispirited by repeated failures of crops and by want of a reliable system of labor, the people of North Carolina have seen their Legislature voting appropriation after appropriation, until their enormous debt of nearly twenty millions of dollars has been doubled.

Other members seem actuated by mere selfish purposes in their support of these measures. Local and personal interests are the controlling motives of their mistaken liberality. Their little towns are to be built up, and their own property increased in value. They will be applicants themselves for lucrative contracts on the proposed road. Money is to be placed in their own pockets, and they can whistle at the tax collector. Men are selfish beings at best, and if these Legislators can themselves meet the taxes and profit by it, we fear they will have but little compassion upon those less fortunate.

Others support these appropriations as party measures. The handling of all these vast millions of dollars, wrung from the over-worked people of the State, will be entirely with the Radical party. Outside of official peculations and pilferings there will be left a magnificent margin for a corruption fund. Contractors and laborers must belong to the party, or their employment ceases. Everybody connected with these State works, from the President to the cart driver, must be a Radical above suspicion. If ex-Confederate Generals and Colonels can be bought up cheaply, surely these millions of dollars can make serious inroads into the rank and file. If the people are in such great distress, which is increased by these monstrous expenditures, surely there is not so much virtue among the masses as to withstand the glittering bribes. The very burdens of the people are to be converted into tempting inducements to sell their honor and integrity. They are expected to be purchased by the very money of which they have been robbed to create this corruption fund.

The decision of the Supreme Court in the Chatham Railroad Injunction Case has been a check to this headlong course. Yet every resort has been attempted to thwart that decision and to meet the constitutional objections, except the proper one of referring them to the people, as is provided by the Constitution. How far these efforts will succeed we are not fully advised. We fear far enough to complete the ruin of the credit of the State which has been already much injured, and to render the suffering of the people of the State even greater.

Immigration Meeting.
We hope our people will not forget that the meeting of the Carolina Immigration Association will be held in Goldsboro, on Friday, the 23d of April next. The Wilmington and Weldon Railroad will pass free, going and returning, those who may pass over it on this occasion expressly to attend the meeting and aid its objects.
This will be a most important occasion, and we trust it is fully realized by those interested. The Agents of this Association are now in Europe, and have already forwarded emigrants. Others will be rapidly embarked, and there seems now no impediment towards making this movement a complete success, but the united effort of our people to give it a helping hand. We look for practical results from the Goldsboro meeting, and trust to see a large crowd in attendance.

Northern Visitors.
A large party of Northern capitalists, some of them gentlemen of distinction, are making preparations to visit the South at an early day. They will stop in this city. The object of these gentlemen is to seek investments at the South, and to report upon the condition of the country and the feelings of the people. So far as our citizens are concerned we know they will receive a warm welcome. We shall be glad to see them, and hope they may be pleased with their visit.

Beef From Texas.
The Lowe Ice and Refrigerating Steamship Company of New York have fitted up the ship Wm. Taber with refrigerating apparatus for the purpose of bringing beef as fresh as the day it was killed from Texas.

NEW STAY LAW.

An Act Suspending the Code of Civil Procedure in Certain Cases.
Section 1. The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact, That all civil actions shall be commenced by writ of summons.

Section 2. The summons shall run in the name of the State, be signed by the Clerk of the Superior Court of the county having jurisdiction of the action, and under the seal of the Court, and shall be directed to the sheriff of the county in which the defendant resides or may be found. It shall be returnable to the regular term of the Superior Court of the county where the plaintiff resides, or one of more of them, or the defendants reside, and shall contain the names of the parties, the nature of the action, and the sum or value of the claim, and shall be returnable to the regular term of the Superior Court of the county where the plaintiff resides, or one of more of them, or the defendants reside, and shall contain the names of the parties, the nature of the action, and the sum or value of the claim, and shall be returnable to the regular term of the Superior Court of the county where the plaintiff resides, or one of more of them, or the defendants reside, and shall contain the names of the parties, the nature of the action, and the sum or value of the claim, and shall be returnable to the regular term of the Superior Court of the county where the plaintiff resides, or one of more of them, or the defendants reside, and shall contain the names of the parties, the 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North Carolina Members of Congress.

Speaker BLAINE has made the following assignments of the North Carolina members on committees: O. H. Dockery, Freedmen's Affairs (Chairman), and Claims; John T. Dewese, Revolutionary Pensions (Chairman), Expenditures in the Interior Department (Chairman), and Indian Affairs; David Henton, Coinage, Weights and Measures (Chairman), and Elections; C. L. Cobb, Roads and Canals, and Expenditures in the War Department; I. G. Lash, Banking and Currency, and Expenditures in the Treasury Department; A. H. Jones, Revolutionary Claims, and Public Expenditures. With the exception of Tennessee, none of the lately reconstructed States have the Chairmanship of a committee except North Carolina, and she has three. But one of these, however, to wit: Freedmen's Affairs, is of any importance. We expect that the Speaker has done as well under the circumstances as could have been expected, for we suppose Mr. Dockery is about the leading Southern Radical member in ability and character.

State Medical Board.

We regret to see an effort made in the Legislature to strike down this excellent institution, and thus to oppose measures protective of the lives and health of the people. It is the duty of the Legislature to foster medical science, and to favor, not oppose, the health and lives of our fellow-citizens. Mr. Welker has introduced in the Senate a bill to demolish the State Medical Board as a useless thing. He is greatly in error, and this step will redound, if successful, to the injury of the State and works every way wrong and evil to the people.

The State Medical Board is part and parcel of that most praiseworthy object of the medical profession of the State, to advance medical science, and protect the health and lives of the people. What avails all efforts at human improvement and material prosperity, if sickness is not attended to and health is not preserved as far as possible? What can man do if sickly and enfeebled by disease? Now the object of this Medical Board is to give health, life, energy, ability to labor to our fellow-citizens of all classes and conditions in our impoverished and depressed condition. It is the offspring of the labor, patient, persevering, devoted laborers, for a number of years, of leading members of the medical profession in our State. It works wrong to no one. It is part of that great movement in this State for many years past of medical men, who are liberal, scientific, humane professors, and determined to do all in their power and generation for the promotion of medical science, the usefulness of the medical profession, and the good of the public at large. It is a part of the State Medical Society, that has been a pioneer in North Carolina in all those measures promotive of medical science and skill, and in all those plans for improving the health of the people, which are approved by all recognized doctrines of political economy and sustained by all the leading men of the State, of all occupations and professions, who are devoted to North Carolina, and who have worked and are working for her best good.

What are the provisions of the law establishing this Medical Board? It says to no one, "you shall not give medicine, nor practice medicine," no arbitrary measures of this sort does it inculcate or justify. Nothing of the kind. It opens the door to any and all, white or black, native or foreign, to come in and administer medicines to whoever will take them—to give what you please and do what you please in the sick room so long as the sick will take your medicines. The law establishing the Board is not arbitrary, not oppressive, not unjust in any manner, shape or form. Any one can, under its operations, practice medicine and surgery in the State. The only clause or feature of the law to which objection is made, is that no one can, since the organization of the Board, collect by law, fees for medical services who, without license from the Board, commenced practice after the Board was established. He must produce a certificate—a diploma—from this Board that he is possessed of good moral character, and possesses the proper knowledge and professional qualifications before he can collect his bills by law. All this is conservative, wise, necessary, practical, and patriotic. The Board was founded on that necessity of protection to health which arises from the miserable scramble for students, and that reckless competition for patronage and power, which exists among the Medical Colleges of the country. So long has this existed, so great is the degrading and abominable struggle for numbers, money, influence among the Medical Colleges of the country that the standard of the Professor has been lowered, and swarms of Doctors have been sent out upon the community from these Medical Hives, with diplomas in hand, many of whom are incompetent, morally and every other way, to engage in the solemn and responsible duties of medical and surgical practice. North Carolina has no Medical Colleges, and it is rather to her credit than discredit that she has not, owing to this prevailing disposition of the Medical Colleges to graduate men who are able to pay their way, without regard to qualification. As a means of protection, to some extent, to the people against incompetent practitioners, this Board was instituted years ago, and it has worked well every way—is no expense to the State, is self-sustaining, is composed of leading and progressive medical men, chosen by the voice of the profession, through the State Medical Society, and sustained everywhere when understood by an enlightened public sentiment. This Board, together, with the State Medical Society, has done more to advance medical science, protect public health, and promote the dignity and usefulness of the medical profession than all other means combined. It has given the profession of the State a name and character, at home and abroad, of which the

physicians of North Carolina and the whole State may well be proud.

Why then should such an Institution, that calls for no revenue or money from the State to sustain it, that is self-supporting, that is composed of practitioners who eminently enjoy the confidence of the public, that adds to public health, and thus to the productive industry and to the comfort and happiness of all classes, be stricken down by the Legislature. It is no party measure. It was enacted by legislators of all parties, and appeals for support from partisans of all parties, from men of all party, and from citizens of all Churches, and of no Church, and from all men who wish for the best good of the State.

We trust it may not be repealed. Let the general work of change and destruction spare this monument of the liberality, humanity and wisdom of the past. Encourage, rather than embarrass, and not oppose the benevolent, scientific, enterprising measures of the Medical Profession of the State to elevate their standard, and to benefit the health and protect the lives of the community.

We appeal to members of the Legislature of all parties to reject this attempt to injure a profession that we all should desire to see improved and promoted in all these laudable efforts of the State Medical Society, and the County Auxiliary Medical Societies to do good; to cure disease; to assuage the sorrows and pains of the human family, and to benefit the State at large. We shall recur again to this subject.

Wilmington Presbytery.

Notice is given by the Rev. L. McKinnon, Stated Clerk, that the Presbytery of Wilmington will meet in the Presbyterian Church, in the town of Clinton, on Thursday, the 1st day of April, at 12 o'clock. There will be conveyances at Warsaw on Wednesday evening, March 31st, to convey persons desiring to attend, to Clinton.

Travel, North and South.

We are glad to know that the Atlantic Seaboard route is becoming very popular with travelers. And we are not surprised, for the lines of roads along the seaboard, between New York and New Orleans, certainly offer more inducements to the traveler than any other. Having recently occasion to travel South we were struck with the great attention paid to the comfort of the passenger. From Wilmington to West Point, Ga., a distance of five hundred and fifty miles, there is no change of cars. One can hardly appreciate the comfort of this arrangement until he tries it. The confusion of the continued changes, the scramble for seats, the exposures to bad weather at all hours of the night are all avoided.

The night trains are provided with elegant sleeping cars which are attended to with scrupulous neatness. On the Georgia road, from Augusta to Atlanta, the sleeping cars are without exception the most magnificent we have ever seen. We had occasion to examine some of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad recently, but they will in no measure compare with those on the Georgia Railroad. The schedules are adjusted so that the passengers are not aroused too early, and in every respect his comfort is consulted without any sacrifice to speed or safety.

There is one matter which Railroad officials might turn their attention to, and the passengers would be benefited. The eating houses along the route are not as good as they should be. There are two exceptions to which we refer with pleasure, Mrs. Brothers, at Flemington, on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad, and the house at Stone Mountain, on the Georgia Railroad, are both superior eating houses, and their proprietors receive the thanks of hungry and weary travelers. We heard the hotel at Florence well spoken of, but we did not enter there.

With the completion of the bridge here, which will be finished at an early day, the popularity of this route will increase. The disagreeable delay and ferriage across the Cape Fear will be avoided, and the change of cars will take place under a shed. We look to see through cars for Aquia Creek and Norfolk running with each train from this city North, thus avoiding useless changes of cars and detentions. A renewed prosperity will enable our roads to be re-laid with new iron, when the speed and comforts of travel will be increased. Then there can be no line which will give as great inducements to travelers as this one.

A New Invention—Fibrous Composition Slabs and Panels for Roofs and Walls of Buildings, &c.

A patent was obtained a few days ago by the American Fibre Company for an entirely novel mode of constructing roofs and walls of buildings, water-proof floors, tanks, &c.

The fibre used is made from the cane or reeds of the cane-brakes of the Carolinas and other Southern States, disintegrated by the explosive force of steam by the process which is in operation in this city. The Richmond Dispatch gives an account of the new invention, by which this fibre is now being used for roofing. As we are sadly in need of fire-proof roofs in Wilmington, and which are now constructed at great cost, we give it not only as opening a new branch of business, but which must result in great benefit to our city. The fibre as it comes from the steam gun is in the shape of long, fine tendrils, resembling oakum. This fibre is twisted or spun into a single yarn or strand, several of which strands are interlaced so as to form a stout matting, which is charged with a composition of tar and pulverized slate or soapstone, limestone, &c., forced into and amongst the fibres by great pressure, so as to make a solid slab. The fibre being thoroughly disintegrated and very absorbent, forms a good base for the mastic.

A series of these slabs made with rabbit-joints are joined together and nailed to the rafters, the joints are cemented, and then another series of the slabs, made in the same manner, are laid over the others so as to break joints in every direction, the upper series being fastened to the lower with a mastic composed of the pulverized slate, etc., and tar, and the joints being cemented together. A light, strong, solid, indestructible slab is thus produced, thoroughly water-proof and practically fire-proof also. A similar composition,

used for roofs in Montreal and New Orleans, is unaffected by the heat or cold.

As the steam-blown reed fibre can be supplied from Norfolk, Va., and Wilmington, N. C., to New York, Richmond, Baltimore, Boston, etc., for fifteen to twenty dollars per ton, and the pulverized slate can be obtained at about the same price, and the tar is cheap also, it is claimed that this invention secures the cheapest as well as the best and most durable roof ever made.

The roof resembles a solid block of slate or stone about an inch thick. A coating of sand is forced into the composition so as to lighten the color and make it resemble stone. The cost is less than that of a tin roof.

The inventors propose to make the same slabs available for the outer walls of buildings in lieu of bricks, stone or wood. The same company have also obtained a patent for a substitute for lath and plaster. For this purpose fibrous composition panels are made by the above method from the steam blown cane fibre, in combination with silicate of soda (liquid flint), lime and clay. These panels are fire proof, and well adapted for ceilings, inner walls and floors, also for cabins of steamboats and railway cars. It is claimed that the fibrous composition panels are much cheaper than lath and plaster, and that they do not warp, crack, peel, crumble or decay, and that they keep out heat and cold.

Certainly these inventions open a wide field of usefulness. They seem to be based upon the most practical ideas, and in fact have been tested to sufficient extent to establish their utility. As already stated in this paper, it is designed to erect in this city a manufactory of boards out of the cane fibre.

Political Disabilities.

The action of the House upon the question of the removal of political disabilities may be a matter of curiosity to some, certainly of interest to a very few. Possibly the different feelings displayed by the colored member, Price, from the two carpet-baggers who represent New Hanover in the House, may be a matter of interest for future reference. No doubt the course of Price will be endorsed by the colored voters of the county, while that of their white representatives is dictated by malice and selfishness. It would be expecting too much of men to aid in removing the disabilities of intelligent and virtuous citizens, when by this very means they have acquired temporary prominence.

A POSTOFFICE ROBBER ARRESTED.—Yesterday detective W. H. Moore (colored) arrested in our city a freedman named Robert Guiver, on the ground of breaking into the Postoffice at Magnolia on the night of Saturday, the 13th instant, and robbing it of some \$80 in money contained in letters and a quantity of postage stamps. Guiver came to this city on Tuesday night last, and after he left Magnolia he was suspected of the robbery. These suspicions were communicated to the officers of this city. Dr. Jobe, the special agent of the department, himself came here with a warrant for Guiver's arrest. The officers have been on his track for some time, but he left the city for the Sound during the week, and did not return until Friday night. After being arrested he confessed the extent of his guilt to the City Marshal, and gave an account of his movements in detail since the robbery was committed. He was sent to jail yesterday morning, to await an examination before United States Commissioner Rutherford to-morrow (Monday) morning.—Daily Journal 21st.

RED KNIFE;

OR,

KIT CARSON'S LAST TRAIL.

By LEON LEWIS.

AUTHOR OF "THE WAGON TRAIN," "THE WITCH FINDER," "THE WATER WOLF," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A LIFE GLORIOUSLY STAKED!

Towards the close of a beautiful day in June, 1867, a man and woman, mounted upon fleet horses, came galloping over one of the great plains of the West, and drew rein in the shade of a clump of cottonwoods upon the bank of a beautiful river. They had ridden far and rapidly. Their steeds were panting, and covered with sweat and foam.

"We must give the horses a breathing spell," said the former, slipping to the ground; and his companion nodded a graceful assent, as she followed his example.

The couple were evidently father and daughter. The man was in the prime of life, hale and hearty, with a large frame, which was sinewy and athletic, without ceasing to be refined and prepossessing. He had the keen, shrewd look peculiar to the advance guards of civilization, and there was an honest, frank expression on his sun-browned face that proclaimed his integrity and courage.

In her way, his daughter was equally picturesque and attractive.

In the early flush of womanhood, with a pure, sweet, and tender face, with eyes darkly glowing, with coral-tinted lips, and cheeks softly flushed with the hue of the rose, with amber curls floating behind her, she was as graceful as a gazelle, as light-hearted as a bird, as lovely as a flower, and as spirited as an untamed steed.

The stream by which the couple had halted was Wood river, a branch of the Platte, in Nebraska, at a point fifty miles northwest of Fort Kearny.

"Are you tired, Miriam?" asked the hunter, George Dane, with fatherly solicitude.

"Tired, father?" rejoined the maiden, with a happy laugh. "Oh, no. How could I be tired after a day like this? Every minute has been filled with pleasure and excitement. I feel as fresh as yonder bird."

The father smiled understandingly, with a look full of the fondest affection.

"I can guess the cause of your lightness of heart," said he smilingly. "The return, now daily expected, of a certain Hubert Earle, from the mine of Idaho, may account, I suspect, for your present gladness."

A heightened color appeared on Miriam's face, for the name mentioned was that of her lover, however, with a frankness that attested his entire sympathy with her, and said:

"True, father, my heart has been unusually light for several days past. How could it be otherwise, since I know that Hubert is coming?"

Mr. Dane did not reply. He was looking, with kindling eyes, over the fair flower-dotted plain; and his next remark showed how widely his thoughts had strayed.

"I wonder what mother has been doing

without us all day, Miriam. She must be lonely, with no one to speak to or share her meals. I shouldn't wonder if we could see our home from this point, and his face lighted up with a soulful glow. "Our cottage is not more than seven miles distant, and we have only to ride a few miles to reach it."

He drew from his coat a pocket-glass, adjusted it to his sight, pointing it in a northerly direction, and gazed through it long and earnestly, towards his ranch upon Carver's Fork.

"Yes, I see it," he said, at last, with a deep, joyful inspiration, as if the sight refreshed him in every nerve. "There is our cottage, as plain as day. I can even see the vines you planted before the windows, Miriam. And there, on the grape-vine bench, under the big elm, sits your mother, busy at her sewing. Bless her! She does not imagine we are looking at her. Look, Miriam!"

He yielded the instrument to his daughter, who obeyed his injunction, her lovely face glowing with smiles as she regarded the distant home-scene.

"Dear mother!" she murmured. "It is a treat to her to be able to sit out under the stars, and to see the roses of her life, her home, her loved ones—there are no hostile Indians hereabout now—are there father?"

"No, Red Knife, as you have already heard, was killed yesterday by a settler, and his band has retired towards the mountains. I will confess, Miriam, that during all the time we have been in the West, I have not felt so light-hearted and care-free as since we have received news of Red Knife's death. You have just seen how this joy bubbles over me. Red Knife was a demon rather than a savage."

Miriam shuddered, and her features even paled at the memory of the Indian murderer.

"I never spared a pale face, she said, striving to speak calmly. "Desolation and cruelty marked his path. For more than three years he has raged to and fro upon the plains like a ravaging wolf. He was the terror of the border."

You have named him appropriately, Miriam," said the hunter. "He had a fiendish hatred of the white race, and his victims have been many."

Mr. Dane held out his hand for the glass, and Miriam was in the act of restoring it, when a strange, grasping, panting sound startled them both, and sent them quickly to their saddles.

The hunter wheeled his horse and looked down upon the river bank, from which direction the sound had come, his manner self-possessed, but his countenance indicative of alarm. The maiden followed his example.

Her eyes were the first to discover the cause of the sound that had startled them, detecting a man's figure creeping along through the undergrowth of bushes lining the shore.

At the same moment, their presence in turn was detected, for the man dropped suddenly among the protecting bushes, as if he had been shot.

"An Indian?" whispered Miriam, drawing from her bosom a revolver.

"Hullo! Is that you, hunter, continuing to watch the spot at which the man had fallen, his hand on his rifle, his manner that of one ready for action.

Suddenly, as the man showed a haggard face peering cautiously from his concealment, Mr. Dane's anxious countenance broke into a smile, and he cried out:

"Hullo! Is that you, Thompson? Do you take us for Indians, that you skulk there in the bushes?"

The individual addressed was silent a full minute, as it seemed, from sheer amazement; then he sprang out from his hiding place with a cry of relief, and advanced swiftly towards the father and daughter.

He was a man of middle age, of the ordinary type of backwoodsmen, strong and brown and stalwart, of the rude, rough type that seems to belong to the border. His face was haggard and white, although covered with perspiration. His breath came through his parted lips in quick, unsteady gasps. He had come far, and swiftly, and looked as if about to drop from fatigue.

"What has happened, Thompson?" asked Dane, with keen anxiety, the man's singular appearance giving him a sudden shock of alarm.

"The Indians," gasped Thompson, scarcely able to command his voice. "They are coming! Red Knife and his band—divided—my wife—my children—Help me!—Help me!"

"What talk is this?" cried Dane, agitated in spite of his efforts at self-control. "Red Knife was killed yesterday—"

"He was only wounded," interrupted Thompson. "He is now coming to take his vengeance on us settlers. He has divided his band into two. They were up at the Deer Fork this morning, and are now coming this way. The points to be struck is your house and mine."

"My God!" ejaculated Dane, as his informant paused in his excited, breathless narration.

"A horse! a horse!" cried Thompson, reeling with fatigue. "I can go no further on foot. My wife, my children—God pity and save them!"

He looked from the hunter to his daughter in agonized and mute supplication.

Dane snatched the glass from Miriam's hands and placed it to his eyes. He had looked to the northward—saw his pretty cottage, his wife busy at her needle under the trees—and glanced at the dim line of the horizon stretching away eastward and westward from his home.

Suddenly the glass dropped from his hand, and he glanced to the hue of the snow. From the west he saw a band of the clouds of scarlet and gold, he held a band of mounted Indians riding boldly toward that unprotected home, towards that unconscious and helpless woman.

With a frenzied cry, he put spurs to his horse, and dashed away like a madman, shouting to his daughter to follow him; at the same time, to shake their heads, and to look for the cause of their apprehensions.

A moment later they had beheld the enemy, and, with frightful howlings and mighty tramp, had begun their wild, mad flight to the southward.

The chase was a long one; and it was not till the hunters had run the buffaloes upon a spur of the Black Hills that they got a good chance at them. They then brought down several plump young buffaloes, and dinner speedily became the watchword.

"It is noon, and we'll have dinner," said the lieutenant, observing that the baggage animals with their drivers were approaching. "Kindle a fire, boys, and we'll have steaks and roasts in abundance."

While this order was being carried into effect, Hubert and the lieutenant were engaged in surveying the scene.

"A lonely and desolate spot," said Hubert, thoughtfully. "It looks as if man had never before visited it."

"And no wonder," returned Brydges, "since it's five miles off the route. What could any man want here, unless he might be in pursuit of buffaloes?"

The being no answer to this question, Hubert proceeded to find an excellent grazing spot for his horse, tethered him, and flung himself on the ground in the shadow of the hill. The lieutenant and a portion of the men followed his example.

Plenty of low bushes were found dry enough to burn, and several fires were so kindled. The choicest portions of the buffaloes were prepared for cooking, and it was not long before the odor of burning flesh was diffused on the air; four or five hungry soldiers serving as cooks.

It was a wild picnic scene on those lone-

are coming! The tender is Red Knife, Go, neighbor Thompson—on the instant!"

"We can ride together!" cried Thompson.

"No! The horse is tired. We have been to Willow Island. We should be overtaken before we have gone two miles!"

"Then we'll die together!"

"No! No! You must mount!"

With a grasp so sudden and firm that it startled him, the maiden pushed him towards the horse, and in another instant he found himself, more by instinct than by thought, seated in the saddle.

"Away, Selim!" cried Miriam to her steed, with an imperative gesture.—"Away!"

The horse broke furiously over the plain, giving Thompson only time enough to flash a look of gratitude towards the maiden, as he dashed away to the northeast, towards his menaced home.

A moment later, Mr. Dane looked over his shoulder—took in at a glance the situation of affairs, recognizing the peril as well as the heroism of his child—bowed his head solemnly, as one submits to the inevitable, in approbation of her conduct, and then he swept on to the rescue of his wife, his soul torn by such emotions as are seldom brought to battle together.

And Miriam, throwing herself flat upon the plain, in the very path of a score of mounted Indians, who were galloping towards her with the swiftness of the wind!

CHAPTER II.

A CURIOUS AND STARTLING MYSTERY.

Skirting the Black Hills, forty miles west of Fort Laramie, a party of horsemen were riding eastward.

They had left Fort Bridger eight days before, taking the route of the North Platte, and were now following the Oregon emigrant road, among those long ridges, dry beds of rivers, and sterile plains, by which the region of the Black Hills is distinguished.

The bulk of the party consisted of ten cavalrymen, under a lieutenant, who were returning to Fort Laramie, their post of duty. They were well mounted, and had several led horses in their train, loaded with their provisions and apparels of travel.

The balance of the party comprised three civilians, who had seized the opportunity of crossing the mountains under military escort, to visit the country, and who had settled near Fort Bridger, but who had tired of the great solitude, or been frightened by the Indians, and were now returning eastward in search of homes nearer the haunts of civilization.

The third civilian was Hubert Earle, the lover of Miriam Dane, the settler's daughter, whom we have just left in such deadly peril.

He was a splendid specimen of American manhood, magnificently formed, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, as vigorous as an athlete, and rode his horse, a fiery Mexican steed, with the grace and ease of a Centaur.

At the moment of his introduction to the reader, he was riding in the rear of the little train, busy with his own reflections, which were evidently as bright as the morning itself—the forenoon preceding the events we have recorded.

His thoughts were wrapt in the sweet memory of Miriam, who had wept so bitterly at his departure, and who, he expected, would smile so joyously at his return.

"The dear little soul!" he murmured aloud. "Where is she now?"

His eyes darkened with tender sweetness, his lips quivered with the ineffable love that flooded his being with a happiness akin to pain. He pictured their meeting, and how they would share together, the years they would spend in each other's society, the tender mutual love and care that would bless all their coming days.

He had left her a poor adventurer, to seek his fortune among the mines of Idaho. He was returning to her a more than moderately rich man, with bills of exchange in his chest, money-belt of sufficient value to support them both in luxury as long as they might live.

It was not to be wondered at that his thoughts were pleasant.

Suddenly he was aroused from his trance-like silence, by cries of delight from his companions, and by the fact that they had checked their speed.

Looking around him quickly, he beheld the cause of the unusual excitement. To the southward, at no great distance, a small herd of buffaloes was grazing lazily, seemingly not at all alarmed by the near presence of a formidable enemy.

The wind was blowing from them, the herds were fresh, and, as he looked at the tempting game, Hubert felt the spirit of the hunter grow strong within him.

Giving rein to his horse, he galloped along the line to speak to the lieutenant, but was met half way by that officer, whose sparkling eyes and eager demeanor attested to a kindling of Nimrod-like zeal.

"What do you say to an hour's sport, Mr. Earle?" shouted the lieutenant, as he bore down upon his friend, for Hubert was a decided favorite with every member of the party.

"I think it would be a downright shame to turn our backs on such a splendid game," was the quick response. "Who could eat a dinner of salt pork, with those fat buffaloes so near us?"

The lieutenant smiled, glanced up and down the line, reading eager longing in the faces of his men, and resolved to carry out his own and the general desire.

At a word of command from him, the party set out at a quick gallop for the scene of action.

The buffaloes allowed the enemy to approach quite near, the wind favoring the hunters; but at length began to snuff the air uneasily, to shake their heads, and to look for the cause of their apprehensions.

A moment later they had beheld the enemy, and, with frightful howlings and mighty tramp, had begun their wild, mad flight to the southward.

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It was a wild picnic scene on those lone-

ly wild, and every man there enjoyed it with true gipsy zest.

Suddenly a shout from one of the men who were strolling around, arrested the attention of the others.

"Hullo, boys!" he cried. "I'm blest if here isn't a cave in the hill! Come, see the hole under these bushes. You never saw published a better hiding place for your lives."

"Jones thinks nobody ever saw a cave before," said one of the loungers. "For my part, I think more of something to eat, than a hole in the ground."

This sentiment was echoed by the others, but the inquisitive cave discoverer, nothing daunted, approached the fire, took from it a torch, returned to the butte, parted the bushes, revealing a dark aperture in the face of the rock, and disappeared within it, his light giving back a yellow glare for a second after he had ceased to be seen.

The camp revelry went on, the cooking progressed, the minutes passed, and Jones did not reappear.

"If that fellow had found a gold mine in there he wouldn't call on us," growled the loungeer who had before spoken. "I wonder what Jones has found. I'll just take a look as dinner isn't ready."

He rose lazily, abstracted a stick of burning wood for a torch, proceeded to the cavern entrance, and disappeared from view.

"Probably," said Hubert, "there's a large cavern under that hill. If we had time, it might pay to explore it. Under the present circumstances, I am like Brown, and prefer my dinner to scientific explorations."

The meal seemed to be nearly ready, for the rattling of tin cups and dishes began to be heard; the lieutenant's small camp-chest was unpacked, and the cooks shouted, "Dinner is ready! Come to dinner."

"Have Jones and Hubert come back?" asked the lieutenant, as he rose to a sitting position, and glanced towards the cavern.

The men replied in the negative.

"Go after them, King, and hurry them up," said the officer. "We must resume the march after dinner, and cannot afford to waste time here."

King, a fine young soldier, took a torch and entered the cave.

The dinner was dealt out—hot savory steaks and roasts—the coffee measured, and the meal commenced, but none of the men who had entered the cave made their appearance.

"How singular!" ejaculated Brydges, testily and impatiently. "I give you five minutes to bring those men back. Go!"

Here, Sergeant Hasley, hurry those men up! Here, Sergeant Hasley, hurry those men up!"

The sergeant, a brown, strong man of middle age, hesitated, and ventured to stammer:

"I beg your pardon, Lieutenant, but I think there's something wrong inside the cave. There's three men in there—all hungry and knowing that dinner's ready. Surely they'd come back if they could. Perhaps there's wild beasts, or some strange kind of gas that smother's 'em, or—"